CELASTRUS (CELASTRACEAE) IN THE SOUTHEASTERN STATES

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The occurrence of *Celastrus scandens* L. in all but two of the Southeastern States, Louisiana and Florida, has been documented by herbarium specimens. Its distribution has been mapped by Duncan (1967). This is the only *Celastrus* native to the area. However, an Asiatic species, *C. orbiculatus* Thunb., which has become naturalized locally, should also be added to the naturally occurring species of the Southeastern States.

When "Woody Vines of the Southeastern States" (Duncan, 1967) was published, I had not seen a specimen documenting *C. orbiculatus* as being naturalized other than presumably immediately around homes. Since then, I have observed an extensive naturalized colony on both sides of the Appalachian Trail at Neal's Gap, Union and Lumpkin Counties in the Blue Ridge Province, Georgia. Plants occur in a deciduous woods between approximately 3050 and 3200 feet elevation. The species, therefore, does belong to the natural flora of Georgia and should be included with the woody vines of the Southeastern States.

The *Celastrus* at Neal's Gap apparently has become naturalized from individuals planted along a formal walkway behind the inn. I saw plants there a good many years ago, probably in the fall, 1940, but did not see any escapes of it. At that time I believed the plants were *C. scandens*. In September 1967, I observed the extensive colony in the woods at Neal's Gap and realized that the plants were not *C. scandens*. A specimen was sent to Dr. Carroll Wood at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University for checking since we lacked comparative material in our herbarium. Dr. Wood pointed out that the *Celastrus* was *C. orbiculatus*.

Plants are so abundant in places at Neal's Gap that some native plants have been eliminated. The twining stems have also damaged a few young plants of tree species. Now that *C. orbiculatus* is known to be so abundantly naturalized, it seems that other records for the species in the Southeast should be reviewed as possible naturalized colonies outside the immediate influence of man. Brizicky (1964) reports that the species is naturalized in Virginia and Tennessee (Great Smoky Mountains National Park). Radford, et al. (1965) indicate that it occurs in North Carolina in two counties, New Hanover and Henderson. The species is omitted from their 1964 "Guide."

Celastrous orbiculatus differs from *C. scandens* in having few-flowered axillary inflorescences along short stems of the current year instead of terminal inflorescences on generally longer stems of the current year. In the former, leaves are present among at least the lower flowers and fruits until late in the growing season, but are lacking among the flowers or fruits in the latter species. Leaf blades of *C. orbiculatus* are oblong to obovate or

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suborbicular with length-width ratio generally between 1.2 and 1.7, whereas in *C. scandens* they are ovate to ovate-lanceolate or elliptical with the length-width ratio generally being from 1.8 to 2.6.

Voucher specimens of the Georgia collection of *C. orbiculatus* are on deposit in the herbaria of the University of Georgia and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

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